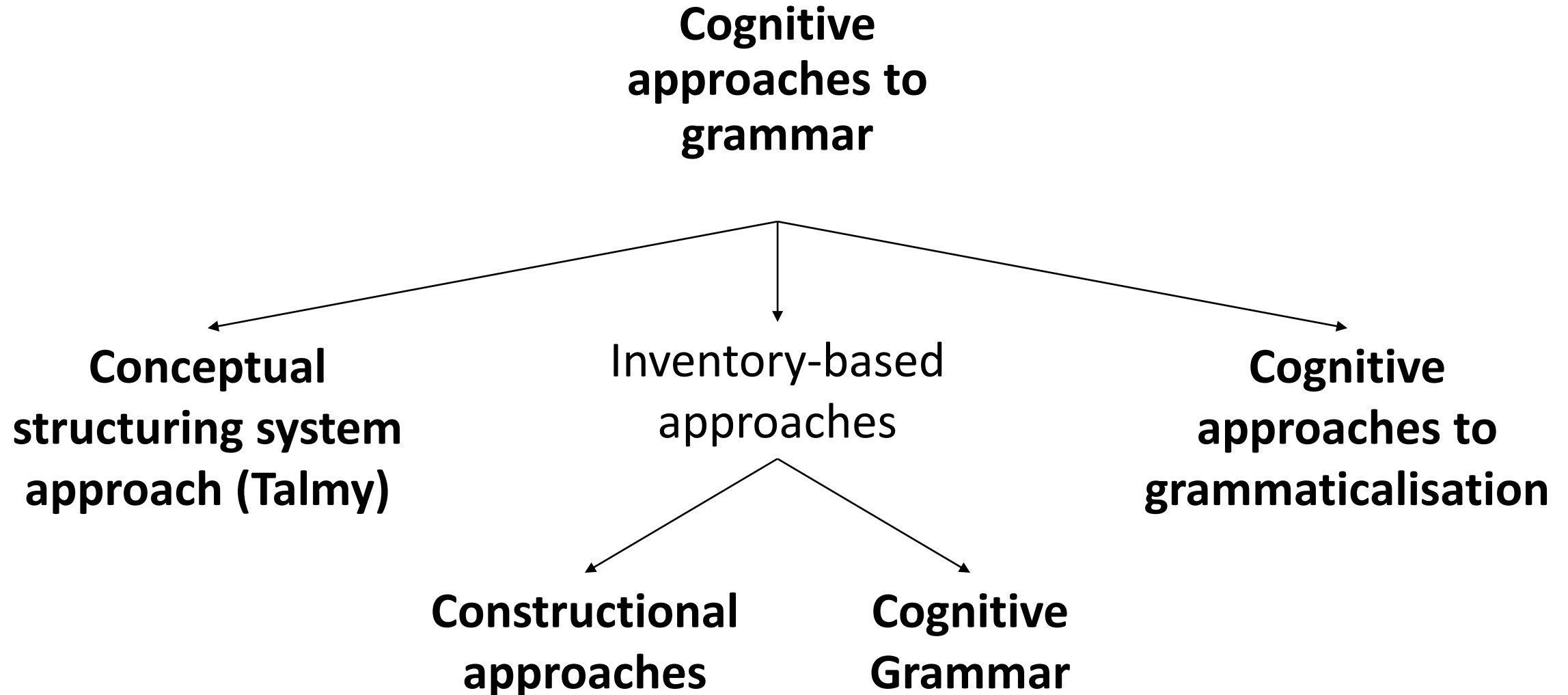


Distinct cognitive approaches to grammar

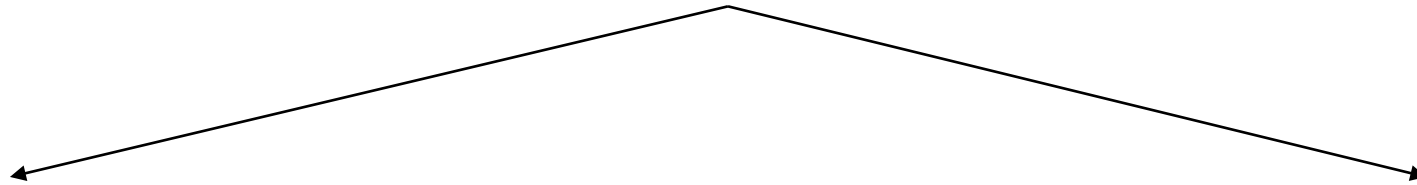
Chapter 14.2

Four main types of theoretical approach



Inventory-based approaches to grammar

Study of the system of
symbolic units that
compromise language



Cognitive Grammar

Study of cognitive principles
and mechanisms that
structure and give rise to
the units of language

(Langacker)

Constructional approaches to grammar

Study of language as a structured
inventory of units

(Fillmore and Kay's Construction Grammar;
Goldberg's Construction Grammar; Radical
Construction Grammar (Croft); Embodied
Construction Grammar (Bergen et al.))

The Conceptual Structuring System Model

- Combines symbolic thesis with grammatical units which both are inherently meaningful
- Grammatical (closed-class) and lexical (open-class) elements are being qualitatively distinguished because they represent two different conceptual subsystems (lexical subsystem and grammatical subsystem)
- Conceptual structuring system = grammatical subsystem
 - Focus on closed-class elements (schematic/structural meaning)



Cognitive Grammar

- tries to explain cognitive mechanisms that cause the formation and the use of symbolic units
- Grammatical units are inherently meaningful as well as in the Conceptual Structuring System Model, although this approach does not separate open- and closed-class units
 - Both exist in one structured inventory of conventionalised linguistic units which display knowledge of language of a speaker

Constructional approaches to grammar

- Grammar can be modelled in terms of constructions rather than words and rules
- The meaning of some grammatical constructions cannot be concluded from its single units but has to be viewed as a whole thing in itself
- Just as cognitive grammar, constructional grammar is an inventory-based approach (grammar is an inventory of symbolic units and not just a system consisting of rules/principles)
- Concerned with characterization of linguistic units / constructions in grammar
- 4 prominent constructional approaches (see slide 3)
- Construction Grammar by Charles Fillmore, Paul Kay and colleagues: Found that grammar can be described through construction instead of „words and rules“
- Example: Idioms (Beat around the bush)

Cognitive theories of grammaticalisation

- Language change concerning open-class elements which transform into closed-class elements
- Words undergo a semantic change that results in a different lexical meaning or grammatical function
 - *be going to*
 - earlier (Shakespeare): literally going to a location
 - nowadays: future tense
- Historical linguists and typologists developed models based on cognitive linguistics which try to explain the grammaticalisation process:
- Metaphorical extension approaches (e.g. Heine)
- Invited Inferencing Theory (Traugott and Dasher)
- Subjectification model (Langacker)